



# Department of Justice

Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown  
Eastern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, February 5, 2009  
[www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae)  
Docket #:

CONTACT: Lauren Horwood  
PHONE: (916) 554-2706  
[usacae.edcapress@usdoj.gov](mailto:usacae.edcapress@usdoj.gov)

**FRESNO-BASED INTERSTATE ECSTASY AND MARIJUANA TRAFFICKING**  
**ORGANIZATION DISMANTLED**

*12 Arrested, 11 Search Warrants Executed in Multistate Operation in Fresno;  
Nashville, Tenn.; and Louisville, Ky.*

FRESNO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that a federal grand jury returned a seven-count indictment charging SIPHAY PHOUANGPHANH, 31, THONGSY THANANVONG, 36; OLEY THENBOUAPHA, 24; ALAN TRAN, 34; and AMPORN PASASOUK, 26, all of Fresno, with conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute MDMA and marijuana. MDMA is commonly known as Ecstasy. The indictment also charges the defendants with distribution of ecstasy and marijuana, possession with intent to distribute marijuana, and a criminal forfeiture count as to proceeds from the organization's drug trafficking.

This case is the product of an extensive, multistate investigation jointly conducted by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, comprised of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Internal Revenue Service—Criminal Investigation.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Karen A. Escobor and Marlon Cobar, who are prosecuting the case, the investigation took place in Fresno, Nashville, Tenn., and Louisville, Ky. It included court-authorized telephonic interceptions and concluded with the service of 11 search warrants and the arrests of 12 defendants in the three cities last week including the five indicted in Fresno today.

The Fresno defendants conspired to send ecstasy and marijuana to Nashville and Louisville, via numerous parcels using the U.S. mails. Payment for those drugs would then be shipped back via mail parcels to the Fresno defendants. The investigation also revealed that at least \$150,000 in proceeds were sent through the mails to the Fresno defendants as payment for nearly 5,000 ecstasy pills and several shipments of marijuana that the Fresno defendants sent in the mails to Louisville and Nashville.

The maximum statutory penalty for a violation of the lead drug conspiracy charge is 20 years in prison and a fine of \$1 million. However, the actual sentence will be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and will be imposed at the discretion of the court. The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

###